



Interview by Jemma Purdey and David Lowe with Nur Rahmah, 28 April 2014

MA, University of Wollongong, 2010 cohort



[00:00:15]	Study in Australia had a big impact on her career. Before going studied nuclear chemical engineering, worked as a safety officer and felt invisible. Studied English before she applied.	Career and background to study in Australia
[00:04:16]	Went to South Korea for a month in 2007, sponsored by the South Korean government, first time overseas. In 2008 went to Japan to do training in safety plans. In 2008 applied for an Australian scholarship but failed the interview.	Previous international experience; Application for scholarship
[00:08:02]	Had two albums of Australian stamps, collected since childhood, wanted to go to Australia to see the animals and plants. Education and training centre helped with scholarship application. First application wasn't successful but tried again in 2009 and was accepted	Prior knowledge about Australia; Application process
[00:12:19]	Application interview was one hour long, other applicants 20 minutes, two interviewers (one from Australia and the other an Indonesian scholarship alumnus) asked about whether Indonesia will have nuclear	Application process, interview

	power plants.	
[00:16:11]	Published three or four papers last year in English, wants to keep up the skill. Won an award from the Ministry of Research and Technology to visit Australia again for a month, the embassy arranged a waiver of the alumni exclusion period so she can go. Loves Wollongong so stayed there and commuted to Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney to do research. Learned about nuclear medicine and later arranged for the professor to visit Indonesia sponsored by Siemens.	Recent research output; awards; ongoing connections with Australia; return visit
[00:20:39]	Has a government grant for four years of research into nuclear medicine. Research is aimed at making dose more accurate. Wants to implement overseas practices in Indonesia.	Future research
[00:24:23]	Moved three times in Wollongong, first month stayed in an Indonesian student's place while she was on holiday in Indonesia. ADS liaison officer helped with renting somewhere to live. Lecturers were helpful too, especially the Australian ones.	Living in Australia, Wollongong
[00:28:12]	Had some trouble with maths, different in Indonesia so had to catch up a bit. Teaching style was good, getting material before classes. At first no-one would sit beside her in classes (mostly men) but made friends after a while, even some best friends.	Academic challenges
[00:31:59]	Wanted to make connections in Australia so made friends with her tutor, she gave him food she'd cooked and was invited to his family's home for dinner. Lived with other Indonesians but didn't make many close friends among them.	Socialising and friendships

[00:35:10]	Often spent all weekend in the library. Managed to travel to Canberra, connection with the embassy through her husband and a friend there from the language course.	Leisure time
[00:36:43]	Seemed amazing, less expensive than Sydney, better transport, free bus to uni. First choice was Canberra but glad went to Wollongong. ADS rejected the course she'd chosen, Applied Nuclear Physics, because ADS policy didn't allow studies in aviation and nuclear engineering. Information day in Jakarta had representatives from different universities - ANU, University of Sydney and Wollongong.	Impressions of Wollongong; Background to choice of course and application process
[00:40:27]	Husband and two children stayed in Indonesia because daughter (15 years) was in last year of junior high school and son (13 years) didn't want to lose a year at school. Challenging going from nuclear chemical engineering to medical physics. Missed family but kept in touch and study in Australia was very important.	Family in Indonesia
[00:42:54]	Children stayed with her mother while she was away. Husband was very supportive and children too, they knew her studies had to come first. ADS provided return airfare so could visit her family. It was a family decision that she go and they stay. Children are learning English, son wants to go to Australia too.	Family
[00:47:15]	Salary was halved while in Australia, so financial pressure, still needed to support family and could send some money home. Had a part-time job in the last semester cooking and	Finances strains; part-time work

	serving Balinese food.	
[00:49:16]	Fainted twice from low iron, forgot to take supplements, and was taken to hospital by ambulance. Was working too hard and got put off eating meat by seeing cadavers at the anatomy lab.	Health
[00:52:29]	Very good, insurance company was helpful and nurses good. Was referred to a gynaecologist who recommended a hysteroscopy but declined at first because had no support, didn't know anyone well enough to feel comfortable with them going with her. Hurt by comments from Indonesian community about family situation.	Hospital experience
[00:55:18]	Did have the procedure in the end. Friend's mother, Sue, came as support person and helped, like a Mum. Family were worried, crying on the phone. Lecturers made allowances for health issues. Health was better after procedure.	Health concerns; friendship; challenges away from family
[00:59:39]	Wants to go to Australia again but can't. Has applied to go to Germany to study but hasn't heard whether successful yet. Wants to study again before starting the big research project next year. Learnt critical thinking and research practice in Australia. Access to reference resources has improved in Indonesia, not the same as Australia but better than before. Internet access helps.	Future study; Breakthrough in learning
[01:02:35]	Question about activity, reduced because of Australia-Indonesia relations and changes to Australian aid program. Wants to collaborate	Networks; Alumni reference group

	with Australian researchers	
[01:06:14]	Keeps in touch with Facebook, reads Illawarra Mercury. Collected stamps in Australia, bought secondhand stamps at the post office. Felt very different when went back to Australia last year, being a student was special.	Ongoing connections
[01:11:34]	In touch with Wollongong alumni group. Daughter now in Jogja studying accounting. PhD would be difficult because of age and feels her work in Indonesia is more important. Encourages others to apply for scholarships.	Networks; family; future plans
[01:15:50]	Paul and his mother (Sue). Paul studied medicine in Sydney and was a tutor for international students. Paul's family. Paul hasn't been to Indonesia.	Friendships
[01:17:58]	There was a little mosque on campus, nice but far from her faculty. Heard of others having negative experiences but didn't have any herself. People asked if she was from Malaysia. Not much Indonesian presence in Wollongong compared to Melbourne.	Religion and Indonesian community
[01:21:27]	Sue taught her to make pavlova, avocado salad. Subscribes to Superfood magazine online, tried making recipes but ingredients not available or very expensive. In Wollongong spent recreation time going to Woolworths and cooking. Loves coriander. Tried pasta and new fruits.	Food experiences
[01:26:16]	First time leading a team, less to ten people, collaborating with another physician and will travel to another area. Discussion about gender in the workplace, feels that there is	Current Research; gender and promotion

	equality at her workplace and promotion is based on merit.	
[01:29:33]	Husband: he missed the chance to get a Masters degree because Nur's studies in Australia were extended by six months after her illness. He is a chemical engineer.	Family
[01:31:09]	END	